

Freeport Debate Centennial
McMurtry Correspondence

DRAWER 5

Debates

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The Lincoln-Douglas Debates 1858

Freeport Debate Centennial
McMurtry Correspondence

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

FREEPORT
JOURNAL
STANDARD

Freeport, Illinois — An ABC Market of Over 85,000 People

A Consolidation of Newspapers Established in 1847

July 23, 1957

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry
Director
The Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

Enclosed is a folder I received the other day on our Freeport celebration of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Centennial to be held in 1958.

I expect to be in Fort Wayne around the 15th or 16th of August and, if you are available, would like to stop in and see you.

It would help if you would bear in mind that we are primarily searching for material relating to the Lincoln-Douglas debate in Freeport. I know you are more capable than I of suggesting what we could use, should it not bear on the debate but still be of national interest.

Probably we can do better by talking it over.

Sincerely,



C. W. Taylor
Advertising Director
FREEPORT JOURNAL-STANDARD

CWT:mr

enc.

July 26, 1957

Mr. C. W. Taylor,
Advertising Director
Freeport Journal-Standard
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Taylor:

I have your letter of July 23, 1957, regarding your 1958 Freeport Debate Centennial. I have read the folder with a great deal of interest.

I would be delighted to talk with you around the 15th or 16th of August. I believe I will be here, however, those dates are quite near a vacation period that I have planned.

If I cannot be here I will let you know.

I sincerely hope our Foundation can be of some help to you in your centennial observance.

Yours sincerely,

RGM:mmm

R. Gerald McMurtry

FREEPORT
JOURNAL
STANDARD

Freeport, Illinois — An ABC Market of Over 85,000 People

A Consolidation of Newspapers Established in 1847

August 28, 1957

Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry
Director
The Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Dr. McMurtry:

The enclosed tear sheets are latest developments of
the Lincoln-Douglas centennial.

Thank you for the reception you gave me at your office.
I am only sorry I couldn't linger and look at the material
you have. Our local library has a copy of Sparks' Illinois
Historical Collections, Volume 3. It is indeed interesting
reading after so many years.

We will follow up, (directly thru the Stephenson County
Historical Society), the contact of the other six cities
and your general agent in Peoria.

In the meantime, many thanks for your courtesies.

Sincerely,



C. W. Taylor
Advertising Director
FREEPORT JOURNAL-STANDARD

CWT:mr

enc. tear sheets Aug. 23-28.

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STEPHENSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1944

MUSEUM AT 1440 S. CARROLL AVENUE
FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

Please reply to
17 N. State Ave.

September 20, 1957

Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry,
The Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Dr. McMurtry:

No doubt you have heard from Mr. E. R. Small, your Illinois agent, regarding our letter asking for an exhibit to be provided by your Lincoln Foundation for the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Centennial to be held in Freeport next August.

We are wondering what decision, if any, has been made regarding financial assistance the Foundation or the Lincoln Life Insurance Company could provide for this task. We are also wondering what you thought of the brochure suggestion contained in our letter. We don't want you to think we are pressing you, but we must see where we stand financially quite early in order to go forward with plans we have.

We are not heavily endowed and depend in this case on what funds we can secure from The Lincoln-Douglas Society budget, which limits us to very small plans so far. Anything you can do to enlighten us on your decision would be greatly appreciated.

Yours very truly,

Milton Babcock

Chairman
Lincoln-Douglas Debate
Centennial Committee

MB:W

September 24, 1957

Mr. Milton Babcock
17 North State Avenue
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Babcock:

I have your letter of September 20 and I note with interest that you are still making plans for the Centennial of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate which was held in Freeport in August of 1858. During the last week or so I have received several letters from Mr. E. R. Small our Peoria, Illinois agent. Mr. Small as you likely know is quite interested in the Knox College-Galesburg celebration of the Douglas Debate with Lincoln and we are working with him on this project. We are also interested in the Freeport Centennial and I can assure you that our Foundation will be glad to provide you with an exhibit. I do not yet know what form this exhibit will take but we are making plans for a permanent exhibit which can be used in the seven Debate cities of Illinois during the year of 1958 covering the Debate.

I am not the one to entertain or turn down applications for financial assistance such as you have suggested might be appropriate for the Freeport Centennial. However I do know the Company's policy in regard to this and I also know that already the Company has turned down several applications of this kind from Illinois cities who are making plans for Centennial observations. You can realize full well that if we made a contribution to Freeport that we would be under obligation to make similar contributions to six other Debate cities. The President of The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company has offered my services along with an exhibit to any city that might invite me to take part in a Centennial celebration. That in itself will entail considerable cost.

I hope that you will not be too disappointed in my comments regarding financial assistance. Perhaps you might want to take this matter up directly with the executives of our Company.

Wishing you a lot of success in your plans for your Debate Centennial I remain

Yours Sincerely,

RGMcMurtry:pj

Director

LINCOLN LIFE

Referred to _____

REC'D SEP 20 1957

Answered _____

Office of W. O. MENGE

Please reply to

17 N. State Ave.

STEPHENSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1944

MUSEUM AT 1440 S. CARROLL AVENUE

FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

September 27, 1957

Mr. Walter O. Menge, President,
The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Mr. Menge:

You are no doubt aware of the plans for celebration of the Centennial of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate in Freeport next August.

A celebration of such national scope needs some degree of financial support that is national in scope, since we are not too heavily endowed with funds for an effort of this size.

We know that your company is interested in any effort to commemorate Lincoln. Should you find it possible to underwrite part of the cost of our Freeport commemoration, we are sure you would receive most favorable publicity here.

Your Dr. McMurtry can tell you about the things we plan to do that require more funds than we can obtain from The Lincoln-Douglas Society here.

Any consideration will be greatly appreciated.

Yours very truly,

Milton Babcock
Chairman, Lincoln-Douglas
Debate Centennial Committee

October 1, 1957

Mr. Milton Babcock, Chairman
Lincoln-Douglas Debate Centennial Committee
17 N. State Avenue
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Babcock:

Mr. Menge has given me your letter of September 27, for which we thank you. We are quite interested in what you are doing and would like to lend encouragement to your efforts.

We do not have funds from which a direct grant could be made but we have talked with Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, and he tells us that Lincoln material could be assembled and forwarded for display purposes at the time of your celebration. We also know that Dr. McMurtry would be willing to try to adjust his schedule so that he could be in Freeport during some part of the program which you are planning.

If you would be interested in display material or a visit from Dr. McMurtry or both we would suggest that you communicate directly with him and the two of you can complete such arrangements as are deemed appropriate.

Assuring you of our good wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Second Vice President
and General Counsel

ACS:hh

June 12, 1958

Mr. C. W. Taylor,
Advertising Director
Freeport Journal-Standard
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Taylor:

Our Lincoln-Douglas Debate exhibit is taking shape. It will measure ten feet wide and six feet seven inches tall. Douglas and Lincoln will be depicted in life size photographs. There will be a rostrum attached to the exhibit on which will rest a large book. In this book there will be pamphlets, bulletins, pictures, prints, photographs and manuscripts.

We expect to place the exhibit here in Fort Wayne in a downtown bank during the month of July. In August will send it to Freeport. We hope to exhibit the display in Charleston in September and send it to Galesburg in October.

Will your Stephenson County Historical Society have room for such a large exhibit? Would not it attract more attention in a downtown bank?

Hoping to hear from you regarding this matter, I remain

Yours sincerely,

RGM:mm

R. Gerald McMurtry

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FREEPORT
JOURNAL
STANDARD

Freeport, Illinois — An ABC Market of Over 85,000 People

A Consolidation of Newspapers Established in 1847

June 16, 1958

Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Director
The Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Dr. McMurtry:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Lincoln-Douglas exhibit.

We will have room for the exhibit in the Historical Society rooms. There will be a lot of other interesting special exhibits - dioramas, etc. - which will draw quite a bit of traffic there.

The local Historical Society is Park Board property and has Historical Park markers on our state highways. Neither bank lobby would hold the exhibit; the only other place would be the Public Library. When you see the Historical Society Home, you will like it, we feel sure.

We will be looking for the exhibit...address it to
Caretaker, Stephenson County Historical Society Museum,
1140 South Carroll Avenue, Freeport.

Also, when it is mailed, will you please notify the secretary of the Society, Miss Ruth Winn, 17 North State Street, Freeport.

Sincerely,



C. W. Taylor
Advertising Director
FREEPORT JOURNAL-STANDARD

CWT:mr

President
ALEXANDER SUMMERS, Mattoon

Secretary-Treasurer
CLYDE C. WALTON, Springfield

ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CENTENNIAL BUILDING 7 SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

June 22, 1958

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Director,
The Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

Thank you for your letter of June 12 in regard to the Lincoln and Douglas exhibit which you have so graciously offered to loan for the celebration of the Charleston debate.

I am forwarding your letter to Dr. Quincy Doudna, president of Eastern Illinois University at Charleston. As co-chairman of the program committee, he will be able to give you a definite answer. Of course, I will urge him to take advantage of your generous offer.

I am sure Dr. Doudna will write you within the next few days.

Sincerely yours,

Alex Summers
Alex Summers
108 Westview Place
Mattoon, Illinois

cc/Dr. Doudna

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RALPH E. FRANCIS, Kankakee

June 26, 1958

Mr. C. W. Taylor
Freeport Journal-Standard
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Taylor:

I have your letter of June 16 and I am glad to learn that you have room for our large exhibit in your Historical Society at Freeport.

On Tuesday of next week we are going to place this exhibit in the Lincoln National Bank and Trust Company of Fort Wayne. It will perhaps be exhibited there during the month of July.

We will, however, get it to you in plenty of time for exhibit purposes in your city.

I am not sure yet whether or not I will come to the Freeport celebration. If I should come, I will bring with me what is perhaps the most complete collection of the different editions of the Lincoln-Douglas debates. I think that this collection of different editions will make a most interesting exhibit in a showcase in your Historical Museum.

I will keep in touch with you from time to time concerning this project.

Yours sincerely,

RGMcMurtry:jy

Director

July 14, 1958

Mr. C. W. Taylor
Advertising Director
Freeport Journal-Standard
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Taylor:

I enclose a photograph of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Exhibit which we will ship to Freeport the first of August.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RCM:hw
enc. 1

HONORARY COMMITTEE
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Hon. Paul H. Douglas
Hon. Everett M. Dirksen
Hon. Leo Allen
Hon. Marvin F. Burt
Hon. John Morris
Hon. Harold Widmer
Hon. George Brydia
Hon. Glen Kunkle

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY

113-115 West Stephenson
FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

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July 17, 1958

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry
Director, The Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

In 1957 we had correspondence with you with reference to the Centennial Observance of the Freeport debate. At that time you indicated your intention of being present.

Our plans for the commemorative day of the Centennial, Wednesday, August 27, have now been perfected. We are enclosing a detailed schedule in the hope that you will be able to arrange your time for full participation therein.

The parade is admittedly at an early hour but the day is, as you will note, crowded. We assume that it would be much more convenient for you to spend Tuesday night in Freeport. In the event you intend to spend Tuesday night with us or Wednesday night, or both, we would appreciate your advice as to what accommodations you desire.

Will you kindly let us hear from you with reference to these matters at your convenience?

Very truly yours,

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY


Robert J. Schmelzle,
President

RJS:lk

"Here was sounded the keynote of a struggle, which
after convulsing the nation, made it united and free"
Theodore Roosevelt in Freeport, June 3, 1903

CEREMONIES OF COMMEMORATION

Debate Site

August 27, 1958, 3:00 P.M.

Chairman	Robert J. Schmelsle President, The Lincoln-Douglas Society
Invocation	Rev. Clayborn Salter
Presentation of Colors	Color Guard, American Legion Post No. 139
The National Anthem	Louis Sudler
Address of Welcome	Hon. Glen F. Kunkle, Mayor of the City of Freeport
Introduction of Distinguished Visitors	Hon. Leo E. Allen Congressman from Illinois
Address: Stephen A. Douglas	Hon. Paul H. Douglas United States Senator from Illinois
Address: Abraham Lincoln	Hon. Everett M. Dirksen United States Senator from Illinois
Address: The Freeport Debate	Hon. William G. Stratton Governor of Illinois
Benediction	Rt. Rev. Msgr. C. F. Conley
Music	Freeport Concert Band

CENTENNIAL OF THE FREEPORT DEBATE

SCHEDULE FOR WEDNESDAY, August 27

Parade: The Freeport Debate	9:30 A.M. Walnut, Main, Adams & Stephenson
Ceremonies: The Lincoln-Douglas Postage Stamp. Hon. Arthur E. Summer- field, Postmaster General of the United States	11:00 A.M. Court House Reviewing Stand
Coffee: Distinguished Visitors	11:30 A.M. Flower Show, Masonic Temple
Lunch: Distinguished Visitors	1:00 P.M.
Freeport Concert Band	2:15 P.M. The Debate Site, State and Douglas
Ceremonies of Commemoration Congressman Leo E. Allen Senator Paul H. Douglas Senator Everett M. Dirksen Governor William G. Stratton	3:00 P.M. The Debate Site, State and Douglas
Dedication: The Douglas School	4:15 P.M. Douglas School
The Senatorial Reception, By The Sponsoring Members of the Lincoln-Douglas Society	5:00 P.M. Veteran's Memorial Home

July 21, 1958

Mr. Robert J. Schmelyle, President
The Lincoln-Douglas Society
113-115 West Stephenson
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Schmelyle:

I have your letter of July 17th, and I will make definite plans to attend the Freeport Lincoln-Douglas Debate Centennial on Wednesday, August 27th.

Will you please make hotel reservations for me (single room and bath) for Tuesday, August 26th and Wednesday, August 27th. I will plan to return to Fort Wayne on Thursday, August 28th.

Many thanks for sending me a tentative program.

I have been reading in the newspapers of your centennial efforts. I have noted with interest that the Hon. Arthur E. Summerfield, Post Master General of the United States will be present. According to one newspaper account Mr. Summerfield will bring with him for distribution fifteen especially made albums of the new Lincoln-Douglas postage stamp. I am wondering if the Lincoln National Life Foundation might not receive one of these albums for its stamp collection.

I will ship our Lincoln-Douglas Debate exhibit to the Caretaker, Stephenson County Historical Society Museum, 1440 South Carroll Avenue, Freeport, Illinois, around August 1st.

I will bring with me the most complete collections of the different editions of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates that has ever been assembled. These I will place on exhibit in the Stephenson County Historical Society Museum while I am in Freeport.

I enclose a photograph of the exhibit. It measures 10 feet wide and 6 feet seven inches tall. The figures are actually life size.

Mr. Robert J. Schmelyle, President

-2-

July 21, 1958

Thank you for your letter offering to secure hotel reservations
for me.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM:hw
enc. 1

July 21, 1958

Mr. C. W. Taylor
Advertising Director
Freeport Journal-Standard
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Taylor:

I am making definite plans to visit Freeport on August 26th and 27th. I have already made arrangements about hotel reservations. I am looking forward to this occasion with a great deal of pleasure.

I have been following newspaper accounts concerning the proposed visit of the Hon. Arthur E. Summerfield, Post Master General of the United States, to Freeport on August 27th.

One account stated that he was bringing fifteen especially made stamp albums containing the new Lincoln-Douglas stamp with him for distribution. I am wondering if it could be arranged for the Lincoln National Life Foundation to receive one of the albums.

Our Lincoln-Douglas Debate exhibit is attracting a lot of attention in Fort Wayne. I am sure it will be favorably received in the Stephenson County Historical Society.

Sincerely yours,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM:hw

HONORARY COMMITTEE
Gov. W. G. Stratton, *Chairman*
Hon. Paul H. Douglas
Hon. Everett M. Dirksen
Hon. Leo Allen
Hon. Marvin F. Burt
Hon. John Morris
Hon. Harold Widmer
Hon. George Brydia
Hon. Glen Kunkle

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY

113-115 West Stephenson
FREEPORT, ILLINOIS
July 22, 1958

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Thomas R. Pfisterer
Mrs. Robert M. Seeley
B. Curtis Taylor
Richard Wahler, Jr.

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry
Director
The Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

We were most pleased to have your letter of July 21 and have arranged for hotel accommodations as per the enclosed. The official program is enclosed.

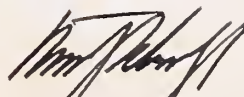
We assure you that we will do our best to have you listed among those to whom the Postmaster General will present stamp albums.

Your proposed museum display sounds wonderful and we look forward with great interest to seeing this.

We shall keep in touch with you, but in the meantime ask that when you arrive in Freeport that you register at Centennial Headquarters.

Very truly yours,

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY


Robert J. Schmelzle
President

RJS:jsm

Encl. 1

"Here was sounded the keynote of a struggle, which
after convulsing the nation, made it united and free"
Theodore Roosevelt in Freeport, June 3, 1903

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY
FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

C O P Y

July 22, 1958

Hotel Freeport
Freeport
Illinois

Gentlemen:

Will you kindly reserve, from our block of rooms, a single room and bath for Tuesday and Wednesday, August 26 and August 27, for R. Gerald McMurtry, The Lincoln National Life Foundation, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Please send Mr. McMurtry a confirmation.

Very truly yours,

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY

Robert J. Schmelzle
President

RJS:jsm

cc: R. Gerald McMurtry

DR. JOHN W. BARRETT
OPTOMETRIST
7 EAST STEPHENSON STREET
FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

July 24th, 1958

Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Director,
Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Dr. McMurtry:

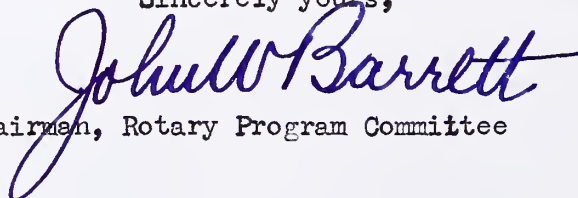
Our Freeport Rotary Club is anxious to start out our Lincoln-Douglas Centennial Week on Monday with a speaker who can talk to us on some of the interesting phases of Abraham Lincoln's life.

When I learned from Miss Ruth Winn of our Stephenson County Historical Society that you will be here with us in Freeport on Tuesday and Wednesday of that week I was prompted to ask you if it would be possible for you to come a day earlier and meet with our Rotary Club of some 120 members at noon on Monday.

I feel you would be able to tell us in a half hour (12:50 to 1:20 P. M.) many most interesting items concerning Abraham Lincoln.

Will you please give this matter your careful consideration and may I hear from you as soon as convenient.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John W. Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

JWB:s

Chairman, Rotary Program Committee

FREEPORT
JOURNAL
STANDARD

Freeport, Illinois — An ABC Market of Over 85,000 People

A Consolidation of Newspapers Established in 1847

July 28, 1958

Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry
Director
The Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Dr. McMurtry:

Upon my return from vacation this morning, I find your letter regarding the stamp album.

Miss Winn informs me that Attorney Schmelzle wrote you indicating he would try to get you one. If anyone can do so, he should be able to as he, (along with his partner, Robert Eckert), has been the leading light in promoting the Lincoln-Douglas Centennial celebration.

I am looking forward to your visit.

Sincerely,



C. W. Taylor
Advertising Director
FREEPORT JOURNAL-STANDARD

CWT:mr

July 28, 1958

Mr. John W. Barrett, Chairman
Rotary Program Committee
7 E. Stephenson Street
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Barrett:

I have your letter of July 24, inviting me to speak before your Rotary Club on Monday, August 25th.

I will accept your invitation, however, it will considerably lengthen my stay in Freeport. I had intended to leave Fort Wayne Tuesday afternoon on August 26th and spend Tuesday night, and all day Wednesday there, and then return home on Thursday. Now that I have accepted your invitation I will have to leave Fort Wayne on Sunday, August 24th at 1:03 p.m. and I will arrive at Freeport about 8:15 p.m. the same day.

I have a reservation at the Hotel Freeport for Tuesday, August 26th and Wednesday, August 27th. Will you have the Hotel Freeport make a reservation for me for Sunday (late arrival) August 24th and Monday, August 25th also.

I must insist on having thirty minutes allotted for my speech. It takes just that amount of time for me to fully develop my theme.

My speech will be entitled "The Why and The How of Abraham Lincoln". I enclose some publicity material along with photographs.

Looking forward to meeting you personally and to the Rotary Club event, I remain

Yours sincerely,

RCM:hw

R. Gerald McMurtry

P. S. No charges will be made for traveling expenses or honorarium.

July 28, 1958

Miss Ruth Winn, Secretary
Stephenson County Historical Society
17 North State Street
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Miss Winn:

On the first day of August we are shipping to the Stephenson County Historical Society Museum the Lincoln-Douglas Exhibit.

It will arrive in especially made wooden boxes which are to be retained for the next shipment. Great care has gone into the packing of the exhibit so that it will not be damaged in shipment. Great care should also be used in assembling the exhibit. It is quite large. It measures 10' x 6' 7". The exhibit is put together with thumb screws. A small hole has been cut into the rostrum so that screws can be attached from inside without being seen on the outside.

The exhibit will be shipped by express prepaid.

Your Society is to supervise the exhibit of the display for the entire month of August. On September 1, it is to be shipped at our expense to the Charleston National Bank, Charleston, Illinois. Please find address labels enclosed.

Please bill us for shipping costs from Freeport to Charleston.

I will be in Freeport during the centennial celebration and I will visit your museum to see this and other exhibits.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM:hw
enc. 4

DR. JOHN W. BARRETT
OPTOMETRIST
7 EAST STEPHENSON STREET
FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

July 29th, 1958

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Director,
The Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

Thank you for your good letter and prompt reply
to my request for you to speak at our Rotary Club
meeting on Monday, August 25th.

This morning, after having read your letter, I
received a communication from our Centennial
chairman to the effect that he had made a tentative
arrangement for a speaker for our Rotary club on
that date. He didn't know that I had written you.

Right then and there we two and some of the members
of our Rotary committee had a huddle. I asked each
one to read your letter.

The feeling on the part of the group was that as
long as we can have another speaker for Rotary on
Monday we should not ask you to lengthen your stay
in Freeport as would be necessary if you were to
address the Rotary club and that you will be doing
enough for us in Freeport if you can spend Tuesday
night and all day Wednesday with us. We don't want
to impose on your generosity and ask too much of you.

The material which you sent me I am placing in Miss
Winn's hands for her to use as she sees fit.

Thank you for your kind consideration of my request
with respect to Rotary and I hope I can have the
pleasure of meeting you when you are in Freeport for
our Centennial celebration. I am taking the liberty
of not making a reservation for you at the hotel for
Sunday night and for Monday.

Yours very sincerely,


Chairman, Rotary Program Committee

August 6, 1958

Dr. John W. Barrett
7 East Stephenson Street
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Dr. Barrett:

I have your letter of July 29 regarding your speaker for your Rotary Club meeting on Monday, August 25th.

I am glad that you have been able to arrange for another speaker for your club on the above mentioned date. I would have been delighted to have made an appearance before your group and I find that I now regret somewhat that other arrangements were made in regard to filling this date. I did not want to imply in my first letter to you that I thought you were imposing on my generosity or that you were asking too much of me. Perhaps I should not have gone into so much detail regarding the time I would have to spend in your city.

I do sincerely hope that you have been able to secure a good speaker and that all will go well for your meeting on Monday, August 25th.

I too hope that I will have an opportunity to meet you personally while I am in Freeport the latter part of this month.

Thanking you for your letter, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

RGMcMurty:jy

Director

August 11, 1958

Lincoln-Douglas Society
229 West Stephenson Street
Freeport, Illinois

Gentlemen:

Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry will be pleased to attend the Lincoln-Douglas Society dinner in honor of the Governor and Mrs. William G. Stratton on Tuesday, August 26th at seven o'clock at Hotel Freeport.

Enclosed please find \$5.00 in cash to cover his reservation.

Sincerely yours,

(Miss) Margaret Moellering
Secretary to Dr. McMurtry

m/m

5

STEPHENSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1944

MUSEUM AT 1440 S. CARROLL AVENUE

FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

August 12, 1958

Please reply to

17 N. State Ave.

Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Director,
The Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

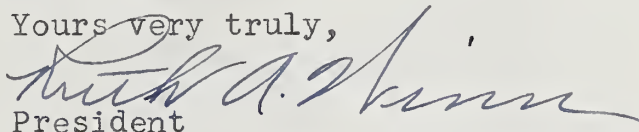
Dear Dr. McMurtry,

Referring to your letter of July 28,
the Lincoln-Douglas exhibit arrived in good
condition and has been set up in our Museum.
It is, indeed, most interesting, and I am sure
it will attract much attention.

As requested, we shall ship it on to
Charleston, Illinois, September 1 and bill you
for the shipping costs.

We have arranged for insurance on all
our exhibits and we should like to know what
valuation you place on the exhibit, so that we
may have it properly covered.

Yours very truly,



President

Stephenson County Historical Society

JOHN W. BARRETT, O. D.

OPTOMETRIST

714 EAST STEPHENSON STREET
FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

August 13th, 1958

Mr. Gerald McMurtry, Director,
The Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

It is unfortunate when you think you are doing a good thing and it doesn't turn out that way.

When the program committee of Rotary and of the Centennial met with me and read your letter they felt that too much was being asked of you to have you come here Sunday in order to meet with Rotary on Monday thus making you add Sunday and Monday in Freeport to your original stay of Tuesday and Wednesday. This would mean being away from Ft. Wayne Sunday through Thursday.

They considered some other speaker, if available, should be asked to fill in Monday at Rotary and for this alone. The Centennial Committee, accordingly has arranged for a speaker from down-state to come up Monday and talk to the Rotary Club on Lincoln.

Your letter didn't give the impression that you thought you were being imposed upon. The two committees just figured your train connections and the time you would be away from Ft. Wayne and they thought it was just too much to ask of one man. I know we will miss a fine talk at Rotary.

Right now it looks like I may even have to miss the Centennial. Mrs. Barrett was called to Colorado last week because of the death of her sister. She expects to be returning part way, close to Kansas City, with her mother and her sister's husband. As her mother will be closing her apartment and moving out to Colorado to run the house and look after the children for a time I expect to have to drive down there to meet Mrs. Barrett and bring some of her mother's things up here to keep for her.

JOHN W. BARRETT, O. D.

OPTOMETRIST

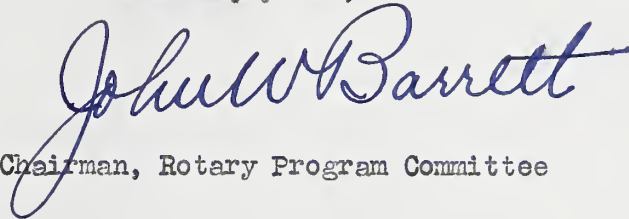
12½ EAST STEPHENSON STREET
FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

-- 2 --

The trip is contemplated for the week before Labor Day in order to miss the rush of traffic on the highways over that week-end and get the girls back in time for school. Unfortunately that is the week of the Centennial. If I am here I will try to meet you.

Your offer to address the Rotary Club on the 25th is very much appreciated by the Club and the program committee.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John W. Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Chairman, Rotary Program Committee

HONORARY COMMITTEE

Gov. W. G. Stratton, *Chairman*
Hon. Paul H. Douglas
Hon. Everett M. Dirksen
Hon. Leo Allen
Hon. Marvin F. Burt
Hon. John Morris
Hon. Harold Widmer
Hon. George Brydia
Hon. Glen Kunkle

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY

113-115 West Stephenson
FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert J. Schmelzle, *President*
John Resh, *Vice President*
Norman Sleezer, *Treasurer*
Robert Chapman
Mrs. Byron O. Cully
Ray M. Kendle
Mrs. Carl H. Neyhart
Thomas R. Pfisterer
Mrs. Robert M. Seeley
B. Curtis Taylor
Richard Wahler, Jr.

August 15, 1958

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry
Director, Ghe Lincoln Nat'l Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

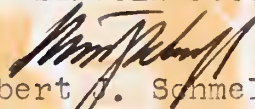
Dear Mr. McMurtry:

We are pleased to enclose reviewing stand credentials and instructions in connection with your visit to the Freeport Centennial. You should be on the reviewing stand in the morning to receive the album of stamps from the Postmaster General.

We look forward to seeing you on that occasion.

Very truly yours,

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY


Robert J. Schmelzle
President

RJS:LK
Encl.

"Here was sounded the keynote of a struggle, which
after convulsing the nation, made it united and free"
Theodore Roosevelt in Freeport, June 3, 1903

August 19, 1958

Mr. Robert J. Schmelzle
The Lincoln-Douglas Society
113-115 West Stephenson
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Schmelzle:

I want to thank you for sending me reviewing stand credentials and instructions relative to my visit to your city next week.

I am indeed most happy that my name is on the Postmaster General's list to receive an album of stamps. I realize, of course, that you are directly responsible for this and I greatly appreciate this courtesy.

Looking forward to meeting you personally next week, I remain

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM:hw

August 20, 1958

Miss Ruth A. Winn
17 North State Avenue
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Miss Winn:

I have your letter of August 12 and I am delighted to learn that the Lincoln-Douglas exhibit arrived in Freeport in good condition and that it has been set up in your Museum and is at the present time being viewed by your visitors.

In your letter you inquired about the value of the exhibit in order that it might be insured. I regret that I have not been able to answer your letter immediately. I would suggest that the exhibit be insured for \$350.00. I doubt very much if we could produce it for such an amount but I believe that that would cover a part of the cost if it should be destroyed.

I am glad that you are prepared to ship the exhibit to Charleston, Illinois on September 1. I am also glad that you are going to send us a bill so that we can reimburse you for shipping costs.

I will be in Freeport next week and I am looking forward to seeing this exhibit and I hope that I will have the privilege of meeting you personally.

Yours sincerely,

RGMcMurtry:pj

Director

HONORARY COMMITTEE
Gov. W. G. Stratton, *Chairman*
Hon. Paul H. Douglas
Hon. Everett M. Dirksen
Hon. Leo Allen
Hon. Marvin F. Burt
Hon. John Morris
Hon. Harold Widmer
Hon. George Brydia
Hon. Glen Kunkle

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY

113-115 West Stephenson
FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

To our Honored Guests:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Robert J. Schmelzle, *President*
John Resh, *Vice President*
Norman Sleezer, *Treasurer*
Robert Chapman
Mrs. Byron O. Cully
Ray M. Kendle
Mrs. Carl H. Neyhart
Thomas R. Pfisterer
Mrs. Robert M. Seeley
B. Curtis Taylor
Richard Wahler, Jr.

We are pleased to welcome you to the Centennial Commemoration of the Freeport Debate. It is our hope that your participation in this Observance of one of the great and consequential events of our history will be enjoyable, rewarding and memorable.

It is a pleasure to enclose materials and information for your accommodation.

1. Guest tickets for you and your party which should be retained by you and used for special seating and admission privileges as follows:

(a) The Parade and Postage Stamp Ceremony
(Court House reviewing stand) Wednesday morning, Aug. 27.

(b) The Ceremonies of Commemoration,
(Boulder Site - State and Douglas) Wednesday afternoon,
August 27.

(c) The Senatorial Reception (Veterans Memorial Home) Wednesday afternoon, August 27.

2. Tickets for you and your party for the luncheon for historians and Civil War scholars.

You are urged to attend the coffee for distinguished visitors at the Flower Show immediately after the Postage Stamp Ceremony on Wednesday. The Crystal Room of the Masonic Temple, directly across the street from Centennial Headquarters will be open all day on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and maintained as a "retreat" for our special guests--a place where you may retire from the crowded excitement of the streets for moments of rest and refreshment.

A hostess desk is being maintained at Centennial Headquarters, Stephenson and Walnut, for your added convenience. We would appreciate your registering at such desk and want you to feel free to make inquiry or request for further assistance.

The Lincoln-Douglas Society

"Here was sounded the keynote of a struggle, which
after convulsing the nation, made it united and free"
Theodore Roosevelt in Freeport, June 3, 1903

September 2, 1958

Mr. Robert J. Schmelzle, President
The Lincoln-Douglas Society
113-115 West Stephenson
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Schmelzle:

Again I want to express to you my congratulations for a wonderful Lincoln-Douglas Debate centennial observance. The people of Freeport are to be complimented for the wonderful work that went into the celebration. There was evidence of carefull planning in every detail of the celebration. I was especially impressed with the appropriateness of each activity with the absence of "hi-jinks" and cheap advertising.

I think every one who attended the celebration was delighted. I can truthfully say that it was for me a memorable occasion.

Last but not least, I want to thank you for placing my name on the list to receive an album of stamps from the Assistant Postmaster-General. After hearing the list read aloud I felt a little presumptuous to be included in such company. Nevertheless the stamps will become a permanent addition to our Foundation collection.

It was nice making your personal acquaintance and visiting in your home.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RCM:hw

September 2, 1958

Mr. C. W. Taylor
Advertising Director
Freeport Journal-Standard
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Mr. Taylor:

I want to thank you for sending me the August 27, 1958 issue of the Freeport Journal-Standard. I have enjoyed reading this newspaper and of course this centennial issue will find a permanent place in our files.

I enjoyed every minute I was in Freeport. It was really a memorable occasion.

I was particularly pleased to have a chance to visit with you and to meet Mrs. Taylor.

I enjoyed my Freeport visit so much that I am now looking forward to the Galesburg centennial observance.

Sincerely yours,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RCM:hw

September 2, 1958

Mr. Alexander Summers, President
Illinois State Historical Society
Mattoon, Illinois

Dear Alex:

Today the editor of our company bulletin called me and expressed the hope that I would have available a photograph of the stamp album presentation at Freeport. I told the editor that you had made such a photograph and that I hoped to get it very soon--if it turns out O. K. Of course I am sure that photographically speaking it will be O. K.

I would appreciate it very much if you will send the photograph at your earliest convenience. Of course you know I will be very glad to pay any costs connected with this project.

I definitely plan to be in Indianapolis on September 10th. I hope you will be among those present. If not, I will see you at Galesburg.

I was delighted to have the opportunity to make your acquaintance.

Sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RCM:hw

The Lincoln-Douglas Debate Centennial

Two great debates stand out in the history of American politics, the Webster-Hayne discussion of 1830 and the Lincoln-Douglas contest of 1858. While lacking the literary merit and formal presentation of the earlier argument, the Lincoln-Douglas series, judged from the wide public interest it created, and the ultimate political movements which it foreshadowed, should be set apart as the most important verbal battle which has ever been waged on the American continent.

This year the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Centennial will be celebrated from August through October of 1958. The seven debates were held in seven Illinois towns on the following dates:

Ottawa	-	August 21
Freeport	-	August 27
Jonesboro	-	September 15
Charleston	-	September 18
Galesburg	-	October 7
Quincy	-	October 13
Alton	-	October 15

The Freeport debate, which was the second of the series, is considered the most important of the entire seven, because on this occasion Douglas answered a question put to him by Lincoln regarding slavery in the territories. In 1857, the United States Supreme Court had declared that Congress did not have the right to pass laws concerning slavery in the territories. Lincoln asked Douglas how he could support "popular sovereignty" when it was contrary to the decision of the Supreme Court. Douglas replied

that despite the verdict of the Supreme Court, the people of a territory could pass laws that would in effect bar slavery from their territory. This reply re-elected Douglas senator in 1858 but lost him the support of the South, thus paving the way for Lincoln's election to the presidency in 1860.

